

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 remain pending in this application for which applicant seeks reconsideration.

Amendment

Claims 3 and 8 have been amended. Independent claim 3 has been amended to improve its clarity. In this respect, the previously recited limitations have been rearranged to further improve its readability and flow. Claim 3 now recites that first and second sound outputs are concurrently output for added clarity. No new matter has been introduced.

Art Rejection

Independent claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Yamamuro (USP 4,472,834) in view of De Vries (USP 6,128,395). Remaining claims 1, 2, and 4-8 were rejected under Yamamuro in view of De Vries and Hatae (USP 5,675,655).

The examiner acknowledges that Yamamuro does not disclose the claimed directivity control unit, but asserts that De Vries would have taught the directivity control unit. De Vries teaches storing delay coefficients and delay times in a memory (EPROM). In this respect, the examiner contends that it would have been obvious for Yamamuro to store a plurality of user selectable sound setting or modes having different directivities in the memory. But even if the combination urged by the examiner were deemed to be proper for argument's sake, applicant submits that combination urged by the examiner still would not have taught the claimed invention for the following reasons.

First, the examiner alleges that Yamamuro teaches the claimed first and second delay units. Applicant disagrees because Yamamuro's first and second delay units 8 each do not output delayed signals to all of the speakers. Indeed, as is clearly evident from Yamamuro's Figs. 6 and 7, the first and second delay units 8 do not output delayed signals to all of the speakers. Specifically, in Fig. 6, the first delay units 8-5, 8-1, 8-6, 8-2, 8-7 output signals only to speakers 10-5, 10-1, 10-6, 10-2, 10-7, while the second delay units 8-8, 8-3, 8-9, 8-4, 8-10 output signals only to speakers 10-8, 10-3, 10-9, 10-4, 10-10. In Fig. 7, note that speaker 9-1 does not receive any delayed signal from any of the delay units. In this respect, applicant submits that Yamamuro would not have taught the claimed first and second delay units. Applicant submits that De Vries would not have alleviated Yamamuro's shortcomings.

Second, the examiner alleges that Yamamuro's amplifiers 9 correspond to the claimed weighting unit. Applicant also disagrees with the examiner's assessment. Note that claim 3 recites that the adding unit adds the first and second delay processed signals that have been

weighted by the weighting unit. That is, claim 3 calls for weighting the delayed signals before they are added, whereas Yamamuro weights (even if for argument's sake that Yamamuro were to disclose weighting) the delayed signals after they have been added (see Fig. 7). In this respect, Yamamuro also would not have taught the claimed weighing unit that weights the delayed signals before they are added.

Third, applicant submits that the applied references also would not have taught concurrently outputting first and second sound having different directivities as set forth in claim 3, even if Hatae were to teach wide and narrow directivity selections as urged by the examiner for argument's sake.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing differences, applicant submits that claims 1-8 patentably distinguish over the applied references and are in condition for allowance. Should the examiner have any issues concerning this reply or any other outstanding issues remaining in this application, applicant urges the examiner to contact the undersigned to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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